



*News Release from Congressman*

# ROB SIMMONS

SECOND DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

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## SIMMONS COSPONSORS LEGISLATION TO STOP PENALTY FOR LATE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PLAN SIGNUP

*AARP Endorses Legislation To Eliminate Late-Enrollment Fee For Medicare Program*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Congressman Rob Simmons, R-2<sup>nd</sup> District, today joined the AARP in support of legislation to eliminate the financial penalty for seniors who missed Monday's deadline for enrolling in the new Medicare prescription drug benefit.

House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee Chairwoman and Connecticut Rep. Nancy Johnson today introduced the "Medicare Fairness Act" – legislation that will lift the penalty for seniors who enroll when the sign-up window re-opens on Nov. 15, 2006. Simmons is an original sponsor of the legislation.

"I enthusiastically join my friend and colleague Nancy Johnson and the AARP in support of legislation to eliminate the late enrollment penalty," Simmons said. "This will allow those Connecticut seniors who had not signed up by last Monday's deadline to use the next few months to learn about the wonderful federal benefit available to them without concern for penalties or additional fees."

Today more than 38 million American seniors – nearly 340,000 in Connecticut alone – have signed up and are enjoying significant savings on their medicines. Independent polls show seniors are very satisfied with the savings and with the program. Many Connecticut seniors are saving thousands on their drug costs. Seniors like Ms. Rita Hoffman, 80, of Norwich. In March, Ms. Hoffman sat down with a Medicare counselor and signed up for a plan that will save her \$3,200 per year on prescription medications.

As an original sponsor of the Medicare Fairness Act, Simmons now joins the handful of Republican members of Congress who have split publicly with President Bush's position that the late penalty assessment should remain. Simmons says waiving that additional monthly premium is worth it.

"Giving peace of mind to those seniors who chose not to sign up by the May 15 deadline is worth the small loss in revenue to the government. I'm a member of the AARP, and if they endorse the legislation, then it's a good bill that deserves swift passage into law," Simmons concluded.

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